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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**GEOGRAPHIC UNIFIED COMMANDS (GUCS): A NECESSARY STEP TOWARDS
ACHIEVING UNIFIED ACTION**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

23 October 2009

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Abstract

Geographic Unified Commands (GUCs): A Necessary Step Towards Achieving Unified Action

President Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 in 1997 directing the Pentagon, State Department, CIA and other agencies to establish “management practices to achieve unity of effort among U.S. Government agencies and international organizations engaged in complex contingency operations”. PDD 56 was superseded by National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 signed by President Bush in 2005, which directed the Secretary of State to “coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.” Although significant advances have been made in response to NSPD 44, an enduring whole-of-government approach has yet to be established to effectively synchronize, coordinate and integrate governmental and nongovernmental activities to achieve unity of effort. Diminishing resources and disaggregated adversaries fighting unconventional warfare require unified action across the full range of engagement, security cooperation and deterrence operations in which military forces and civilian counterparts are engaged. The Geographic Combatant Commander functioning in a Geographic Unified Commander role is the best option to synchronize all instruments of national power in order to achieve unified regional priorities that are in support of national strategic objectives. The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) approach to unified action; integrating interagency members in positions where their expertise can be most utilized, is the best practice to optimally synchronize instruments of national power and achieve unity of effort.

Development, diplomacy, and defense programs are integrally linked, and U.S. Africa Command is implementing the National Defense Strategy's vision of a new jointness by supporting and improving collaboration with other agencies and departments across our Government, as well as improving coordination with international, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations. We achieve the greatest effect for our nation when we coordinate and harmonize our collective efforts in support of our common objectives.

- General William E. Ward, USA
17 March 2009 Statement to Senate Armed Services
Committee and House Armed Services Committee

INTRODUCTION

Joint Pub 1-02 defines Unified Action as “The synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort”.¹ Unified Action in the planning process has potential to eliminate redundant planning efforts and lead to a more efficient use of available resources. Unified Action in the execution of a well-synchronized plan will help to ensure that all objectives of participating organizations are advanced towards a common strategic goal. However, differences in culture between organizations, competing departmental budgets, concern over losing power and general inertia against change are all factors preventing the U.S. from achieving a comprehensive unity of effort. Arguments have been made that a congressional mandate in the form of a second Goldwater-Nichols² act is required to ensure that governmental organizations fully commit to working together. Today's complex environment in which military forces and civilian counterparts are required

¹ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 12 April 2001 as amended through 19 August 2009), 573.

² Project on National Security Reform, *Forging a New Shield, report to President Obama, Congress and the Department of Defense*, 26 November 2008, 536-539.

to collaborate (with diminishing resources) to combat a global Islamist insurgency,³ provide short notice humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) and render Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), does not allow time for congressional reform. Unity of effort to efficiently synchronize all Instruments of Power (IOPs) is an imperative now. If you accept the premise that operations in support of national objectives are seldom (if ever) conducted solely within the purview of one instrument of power (Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economics), then the question becomes: how can all instruments of power be optimally synchronized (unified action) in order to achieve national objectives? This paper will argue that the Geographic Combatant Commander (functioning in a Geographic Unified Commander role) is the best option to synchronize all instruments of national power within an Area of Responsibility (AOR), in order to achieve unified regional priorities that are in support of national strategic objectives.

The Geographic Combatant Commander and individual country Ambassador understand that his or her actions will have ramifications in the other's sphere of influence and both should be synchronized to achieve common national strategic objectives. In a recent Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ) article, Ambassador Edward Marks (Senior Fellow with the School of Public Policy, Program on Peacekeeping Policy, at George Mason University) argued that the term Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) is not "consumer-friendly" and establishment of USAFRICOM "will seriously handicap American public diplomacy and strategic communication as long as it exists".⁴ In rebuttal, Ambassador Mary C. Yates (Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities, U. S. Africa Command) agreed that

³ David J. Kilcullen, *Countering Global Insurgency*, The Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol 28, No 4 (August 2005), 597-617.

⁴ Edward Marks, "Why USAFRICOM?" *The Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 52, 1st quarter 2009, 150, also available online at http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i52/28.pdf (accessed 17 October 2009).

GCC has military only connotations (obviating a unified role) and suggested the more “consumer friendly” term of Geographic Unified Command (GUC).⁵ She goes on to state “everything the command [USAFRICOM] does is in support of U.S. foreign policy and subordinated to chief of mission authority and the mission campaign plans produced.”⁶ The Geographic Combatant Commander is best suited to synchronize, coordinate, and/or integrate the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort (unified action)⁷ at the operational level. In this capacity he or she is filling the role of a unified (vice military only) commander, and the term *Geographic Unified Command (GUC)*⁸ is more appropriate than Geographic Combatant Command (GCC). With appropriate organizational and doctrinal changes, the GCC can be viewed by all governmental organizations as a resource to achieve unified action and common strategic objectives, vice a “non-consumer friendly” element of another department competing for budgetary resources.

⁵ Mary C. Yates, “U.S. Africa Command: Value Added,” *The Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 52, 1st quarter 2009, 153. Also available online at <http://www.africom.mil/fetchBinary.asp?pdfID=20081223110957>.

⁶ Ibid, 155.

⁷ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication (JP 1-02 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 12 April 2001 as amended through 19 August 2009), 573.

⁸ Throughout the rest of this paper I will substitute Geographic Unified Command for Geographic Combatant Command, when using the future tense.

BACKGROUND

The United States faces a more complex security environment today than that of the Cold War. We have seen a growing realization the nation's challenges – such as fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, fighting terrorism, and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – require holistic strategies that make use of the capabilities of all government agencies. Instead, our national security structures remain essentially unchanged from the days of the Cold War. The mechanisms to integrate all of the U.S. governmental departments and agencies that should play a role in the development of our national security policy and in translating that policy into integrated action are weak, if they exist at all. Where they do exist, they are usually the ad hoc efforts of those directly engaged in the challenge of the moment, and not the result of a deliberative process designed to achieve a unity of effort that emerges as a natural product of governmental function.

- Chairman Ike Skelton, House Armed Services Committee
15 April 2008 Opening Statement: Hearing on Building Partnership
Capacity and the Development of the Interagency Process

The concept of harmonizing instruments of power to achieve objectives is not new.

Sun Tzu's military classic the *Art of War* written approximately 400 B.C.⁹ stated, "The clever combatant looks to the effect of combined energy, and does not require too much from individuals."¹⁰ In the 18th Century, the Prussian Military Strategist Carl Von Clausewitz wrote "war cannot be divorced from political life, and when ever this occurs in our thinking about war, the many links that connect the two elements are destroyed and we are left with something pointless and devoid of sense."¹¹ More recently, lessons learned from Interagency cooperation challenges experienced in the 1990's during complex contingency¹² operations such as Haiti and Somalia made it clear that a more effective collaboration of government agencies was required in order to achieve unity of effort. Consequently, President Clinton

⁹ Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu: the Art of War*, (Oxford University Press, 1963), 11

¹⁰ Translated by Lionel Giles, *Sun Tzu on the Art of War*, 1910,
<http://www.artofwarsuntzu.com/Art%20of%20War%20PDF.pdf>
(accessed 18 October 2009), 10.

¹¹ Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War*, (Princeton University Press, 1976), 605.

¹² PDD 56 defines complex contingency operations as peace operations, humanitarian intervention and foreign humanitarian assistance operations.

signed Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 in May 1997, which directed the Pentagon, State Department, CIA and other agencies to establish “management practices to achieve unity of effort among U.S. Government agencies and international organizations engaged in complex contingency operations”.¹³ On 07 December 2005, President Bush superseded PDD-56 with National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 which directed the Secretary of State to “coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct stabilization and reconstruction activities.”¹⁴ Although significant advances have been made in response to NSPD 44, an enduring whole-of-government approach¹⁵ has yet to be established to effectively synchronize, coordinate and integrate governmental and nongovernmental activities to achieve unity of effort. Diminishing resources and disaggregated adversaries fighting unconventional warfare require unified action across the full range of engagement, security cooperation and deterrence operations in which military forces and civilian counterparts are engaged. Combating a global Islamist Insurgency, providing short notice humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) and rendering Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) require the same unified action approach to solve as required by stabilization and reconstruction activities. In fact, the marriage of war and politics as stated earlier by Carl Von Clausewitz, rightfully suggests that every military operation could be more optimally achieved by synchronizing these two elements of national power. The need to efficiently synchronize instruments of power to achieve desired effects

¹³ White Paper, *The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations*, Presidential Decision Directive National Security Counsel (PDD/NSC-56), May 1997, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm> (accessed 18 October 2009).

¹⁴ Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization, National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-44 (07 December 2005), <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html/> (accessed 20 October 2009).

¹⁵ Marks, 149.

has been recognized for over 2400 years and mandated by Presidential directive for over a decade. However, actual unity of effort to achieve U.S. national strategic objectives is still a long way from being achieved.

YOU CAN'T JUMP START UNIFIED ACTION IN CRISIS

On 26 December 2004, enormous forces that had been building deep in the earth's crust for centuries were suddenly released off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.¹⁶ The violent movement of the tectonic plates displaced the sea floor along a rupture, estimated by the U.S. Geological Service (USGS), to be more than 600 nautical miles long and unleashed a series of killer tsunamis that sped toward the coastline of 11 Indian Ocean countries, resulting in more than 150,000 dead or missing, and millions more homeless by the end of the first day¹⁷. The enormity of the crisis and lack of applicable contingency planning¹⁸ required an integrated DoS, DoD and multi-national planning effort to rapidly and effectively coordinate the massive multi-national relief effort.¹⁹ Realizing the scope of the problem, the U.S. Department of State (DoS) requested support from the Department of Defense (DoD). This support request was anticipated by the Geographic Combatant Commander for the Pacific Area of Responsibility (PACOM) who on 27 December 2004 deployed initial Pacific Fleet (PACFLT), Pacific Air Force (PACAF) and Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) relief

¹⁶ National Geographic Web site, "The Deadliest Tsunami in History?" http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/12/1227_041226_tsunami.html (accesses 18 October 2009).

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ The existing PACOM Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HA/DR) Contingency Plan (CONPLAN) only addressed a single nation disaster and was of limited value for *Operation Unified Assistance*, since each affected country had different political considerations, humanitarian assistance requirements, force protection issues and transition criteria.

¹⁹ NWC JMO Faculty, "Operation Unified Assistance Case Study," 38, [https://portal.nwc.navy.mil/academics/jmo/JMO%20Sessions/JMO%2036%20Foreign%20Humanitarian%20Assistance%20and%20Disaster%20Relief%20\(Seminar\)/NWC%203096A%20Operation%20Unified%20Assistance.pdf](https://portal.nwc.navy.mil/academics/jmo/JMO%20Sessions/JMO%2036%20Foreign%20Humanitarian%20Assistance%20and%20Disaster%20Relief%20(Seminar)/NWC%203096A%20Operation%20Unified%20Assistance.pdf) (accessed 24 September 2009).

elements and established a Joint Task Force Forward Command Element (JTF FCE) as part of *Operation Unified Assistance (OUA)*. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was designated as the lead U.S. Government (USG) agency to respond to the crisis, with the military operating in a supporting role. Within USAID, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) coordinated the efforts of more than 20 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) providing relief to those affected. Lessons learned from OUA lauded the use of the Multi-National Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT), which was a concept established in 1999 “to foster cooperation among nations in the Asia-Pacific region, International Organizations (IOs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGO’s) and UN agencies”.²⁰ Sixteen of the 21 countries that contributed military forces to the tsunami relief effort were existing partners in the MPAT program, providing the necessary regional expertise to synchronize the Crisis Action Planning (CAP) effort. The success of U.S. support to the multi-national tsunami relief effort was in large part due to the MPAT relationships developed over a 5-year history of cooperative planning. Likewise, the successful synchronization of U.S. instruments of power in time of crisis requires governmental organizations that work well together during non-crisis periods. The policy of designating lead government agencies with crisis action centers to respond in emergent situations cannot be as effective as the response from a unified planning organization that is in place to synchronize the steady state (engagement, security cooperation and deterrence)²¹ planning effort within the AOR, and able to respond in crisis. Such an organization would have the advantage of familiarity with the steady state plan,²² an understanding of where it

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ JP3-0, Joint Operations defines this phase of the Range of Military Operations (ROMO) as Military Engagement, Security Cooperation and Deterrence.

²² I’ll refer to this in subsequent paragraphs as the theater campaign plan.

may fail, and a vested interest in developing an optimally synchronized, unified action plan to return to steady state.

THEATER CAMPAIGN PLAN: A UNIFIED “LIVING” DOCUMENT

AP (Adaptive Planning) will provide the foundation for a constellation of joint and combined operations, and living plans designed and resourced to achieve national defense, and military strategy objectives in a manner that is both militarily and politically acceptable.

- Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates
05 March 2008 MEMORANDUM on the implementation of the
Adaptive Planning (AP) roadmap II

The Department of Defense (DoD) Guidance for the Employment of Forces (GEF) requires each Geographic Combatant Commander to develop a Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) identifying how steady state (engagement, security cooperation and deterrence) operations in their respective Areas of Responsibility (AORs) will contribute to accomplishing strategic end states.²³ It further requires the Commander to synchronize the TCP with the Ambassador’s Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) for each country in his AOR and provides the following planning guidance:²⁴

- Strategic End states (theater or functional) for campaign planning
- Strategic Assumptions
- Prioritized contingency planning scenarios and end states
- Global posture and global force management guidance

²³ Patrick C. Sweeney, *A Primer for: Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF), Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP), the Adaptive Planning and Execution (APEX) System, and the Global Force Management (GFM)*, 24 March 2009, 1-2, <https://portal.nwc.navy.mil/academics/jmo/JMO%20Sessions/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2facademics%2fjmo%2fJMO%20Sessions%2fJMO%2044%20JOPES%20Part%201%20%28UNCLAS%20Seminar%29%2fRequired%20Readings&FolderCTID=%26View=%267b97FB186A%2d1FAD%2d4D07%2dAB1E%2d7C9F34DCC7E2%7d> (accessed 06 October 2009).

²⁴ Ibid, 2.

- Security cooperation priorities
- Overarching DoD and U.S. nuclear policy

The intent of the Theater Campaign Plan is to avoid stove piped contingency planning by requiring Combatant Commander's (CCDRs) to generate an AOR wide holistic plan incorporating all contingency plans as branches, in case the TCP fails.²⁵ Embedding theater contingency plans within the TCP also requires the CCDR to synchronize all military and interagency phase zero (shaping)²⁶ activities within the AOR to deter potential adversaries and achieve common strategic end states. Figure 1 depicts the joint phasing construct with notional level of military effort by phase of operation.²⁷ In essence, the Theater Campaign Plan “operationalizes” the CCDR’s theater strategy.²⁸ DoD instruction requires the CCDR “integrate stability operations tasks and considerations into their Theater Campaign Plans,



Figure 1: Joint Phases and Notional Military Effort (JP 3-0)

²⁵ Ibid, 4.

²⁶ Activities to deter potential adversaries and assure relationships with friends and allies

²⁷ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 13 February 2008), 128.

²⁸ Sweeney, 8.

theater strategies, and applicable DoD-directed plans. Align DoD theater strategies and plans with complementary stability operations-related capabilities, strategies, and plans of other U.S. Government agencies, foreign government and security forces, and the private sector, as they mature and capacity increases.”²⁹ The requirement to synchronize the Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) with the Ambassador’s Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) provides a venue for each Ambassador to ensure their country specific objectives are in sync with regional Department of Defense (DoD) objectives and aligned to achieve national strategic objectives. Essentially all DoD, DoS and other governmental agencies with regional stakes share an interest in ensuring the accuracy and viability of the Theater Campaign Plan. Continued validity of the Theater Campaign Plan is maintained by the Adaptive Planning and Execution (APEX) system, that was adopted by the DoD in 2005.³⁰ APEX is a “system of joint policies, processes, procedures, and reporting structures, supported by communications and information technology that is used by the Joint Planning and Execution Community to monitor, plan, and execute mobilization, deployment, employment, sustainment, redeployment, and demobilization activities associated with joint operations”.³¹ APEX facilitates a “living” Theater Campaign Plan, maintained in a collaborative environment supported by real-time updates in guidance and changes to planning parameters by authoritative sources.³² The “living” Theater Campaign Plans from each Geographic Unified Commander provides assurance to the National Command Authority (NCA) that military actions are synchronized with Other Governmental Organizations (OGOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in each geographic AOR towards the accomplishment

²⁹ Stability Operations,, “DoD Instruction umber 3000.05, (16 September 2009).

³⁰ Ibid,12.

³¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Adaptive Planning Roadmap II (March 2008)*, 6.

³² Ibid, 9.

of national strategic objectives. However, effective synchronization of these plans is heavily dependent on how well integrated OGO and NGO personnel are involved in the planning process. Effective planning requires representation from all organizations that will contribute towards plan execution. Failing to do so may result in the planning team making inaccurate assumptions with significant impact on plan development. Hopefully any “false” assumptions will be caught later by inter-agency review, although this will likely set plan development back significantly while the impact of the assumption is traced throughout the plan and, where necessary corrected. The worst-case scenario is that false assumptions, made by a planning team (lacking appropriate representation), are never corrected and the ability to execute the plan is significantly impacted. Department of State and other governmental agency planning organizations typically lack the depth of military personnel, with required joint expertise, that are needed to effectively develop a unified action plan. Conversely, the robust military planning staff assigned to the Geographic Unified Commander often lacks adequate representation from DoS and other non-military organizations. Consequently, the ability of the Geographic Combatant Commander to develop a well-synchronized, unified action Theater Campaign Plan is heavily dependant on the expertise and degree of participation of OGO personnel assigned to his planning staff.

GEOGRAPHIC UNIFIED COMMAND BEST PRACTICES

AFRICOM has been established and Southern Command reorganized, heralding a new approach to integrating civilian agencies and perspectives into the traditional military command structure. In fact, one of the two deputy commanders for AFRICOM will be a State Department Officer, and State is doubling the number of Foreign Service Officers assigned to military headquarters overall.

- Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates
15 April 2008 Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee

December 2008, Admiral Stavridis (Commander U.S. Southern Command) in his Command Strategy for 2018 identified the need to “respond to the ever-constant mandate to meet our joint military requirements and to recognize the increasing importance of integrating all instruments of national capability to meet the challenges of the future throughout the hemisphere.”³³ The unified command approach taken by General Ward, (U.S. Africa Command) to integrate interagency members was recognized by Secretary of Defense Gates (in joint testimony with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice) as an indicator of effective interagency cooperation during testimony to the House Armed Services Committee³⁴. The existing interagency support at the Geographic Combatant Command; Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG), Political Advisor (POLAD) and country desk officers are essential to the CCDR staff but typically lack the capacity necessary to effectively integrate into the crisis action and contingency planning organizations. By integrating interagency members “in positions where their subject matter expertise could be best used,”³⁵ General Ward significantly augmented the capability of his planning staff. During the same testimony, Secretary of State Rice commented, “we will not meet the challenges of the 21st century through military or any other means alone. Our national security requires the integration of our universal principles with all elements of our national power”.³⁶ By assigning ambassador J. Anthony Holmes (a former ambassador with

³³ J. Stavridis, “United States Southern Command Strategy 2018,” U.S. Southern Command, <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/files/0UI011177092386.pdf> (accessed 20 October 2009).

³⁴ Robert m. Gates, “Secretary of Defense Robert m. Gates Testimony Before the House Armed Services Committee April 15, 2008 9:30 A.M.”, <http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/FC041508/GatesTestimony041508.pdf> (accessed 20 October 2009).

³⁵ Yates, 154.

³⁶ Condoleezza Rice, “Testimony of Secretary Condoleezza Rice Before the House Armed Services Committee with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates April 15, 2008”, <http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/FC041508/RiceTestimony041508.pdf> (accessed 20 October 2009).

AFRICOM experience³⁷) as the Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities, General Ward established unified command legitimacy for integration of regional DoS and USAFRICOM objectives. It's important to note that ambassador Holmes is only in the geographic unified chain of command and does not in any way violate the regional ambassadors' letter of instruction that states "the only authorized channel for instructions to the COM [Chief of Mission] is through the secretary of state or directly from the president".³⁸ The country ambassador remains the president's direct representative and gains a resource with regional experience to assist in synchronizing the Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) with other regional DoS and DoD objectives.

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

Although most readers will acknowledge the benefits of unified action and the presidential requirement to achieve it, it will be difficult to reach a consensus on the actual method of doing so. If it were easy, we would already have achieved enduring unified action. The reasons mentioned earlier; differences in culture between organizations, competing departmental budgets, concern over losing power and general inertia against change have prevented us from fully realizing the benefits of unified action, and will continue to do so unless we can break the paradigm. I'll address each of these individually. First, there always have been and always will be differences in culture between the Department of State and Department of Defense.³⁹ It is precisely these differences that empowers unified action and crosses the seams that would otherwise exist in planning and execution. Good operational

³⁷ J. Anthony Homes, "Biography," <http://www.africom.mil/holmes.asp> (accessed 19 October 2009).

³⁸ Jon Gundersen, "Protecting U.S. National Interests: The Role of the Ambassador and the Country Team," *Special Warfare*; Fall 1998; 27.

³⁹ LTC Rickey L. Rife US Army, provides a good summary of these differences in his May 1998 article entitled "Defense is from Mars, State is from Venus – Improving Communications and Promoting National Security."

level planners look to include a maximum range of experience and culture in the planning process to avoid stovepipe analysis and groupthink. Second, competing departmental budgets and diminishing resources is a principal driver for achieving unity of effort. A single, robust, regional, interagency planning organization provides the expertise necessary to optimize the planning process towards achieving strategic objectives, and should negate the need for competing single agency planning. Planners in these organizations are better suited contributing to the “living” Theater Campaign Plan, allowing resources to be saved elsewhere. Third, the concern over losing power was addressed previously by noting that transforming the Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) to a Geographic Unified Command(GUC) does not alter the Ambassador role and direct link to the president. DoS (or another appropriate interagency organization) gain senior leadership roles in a GUC and all governmental and nongovernmental agencies gain a robust interagency planning organization for regional steady state planning and crisis action response. Mitchell Thompson in the winter 2005 edition of *Parameters* agrees with a GCC transformation into interagency organizations but argues, “Only civilian leadership, with significant interagency experience, can recreate these commands into truly interagency organizations”⁴⁰. I disagree. The same logic that is used to select a coalition force commander can be applied to the Geographic Unified Commander role; the Commander should be chosen based on “preponderance of forces” and resources to command and control (C2) them.⁴¹ An evaluation should be made to determine leadership at each Geographic Unified Command, based on which instrument of national power represents the preponderance of forces (personnel) and possess the best

⁴⁰ Mitchell J. Thompson, “Breaking the Proconsulate: A New Design for National Power,” *Parameters: Winter 2005/2006*, 74, available at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/05winter/thompson.pdf> (accessed 19 October 2009).

⁴¹ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 13 February 2008), 16,44.

means of command and control. It is helpful to eliminate sources of friction that contribute to inertia against change. One source is the argument that unified action will not be possible while the DoD's Unified Command Plan (UCP) Area's of Responsibility (AOR's) are different than the State Department' regional bureaus (figure 2 and figure 3 represent the DoD Geographic Combatant Command AORs and DoS regional



Figure 2: Geographic Combatant Command Regional Boundaries (UCP 2008)

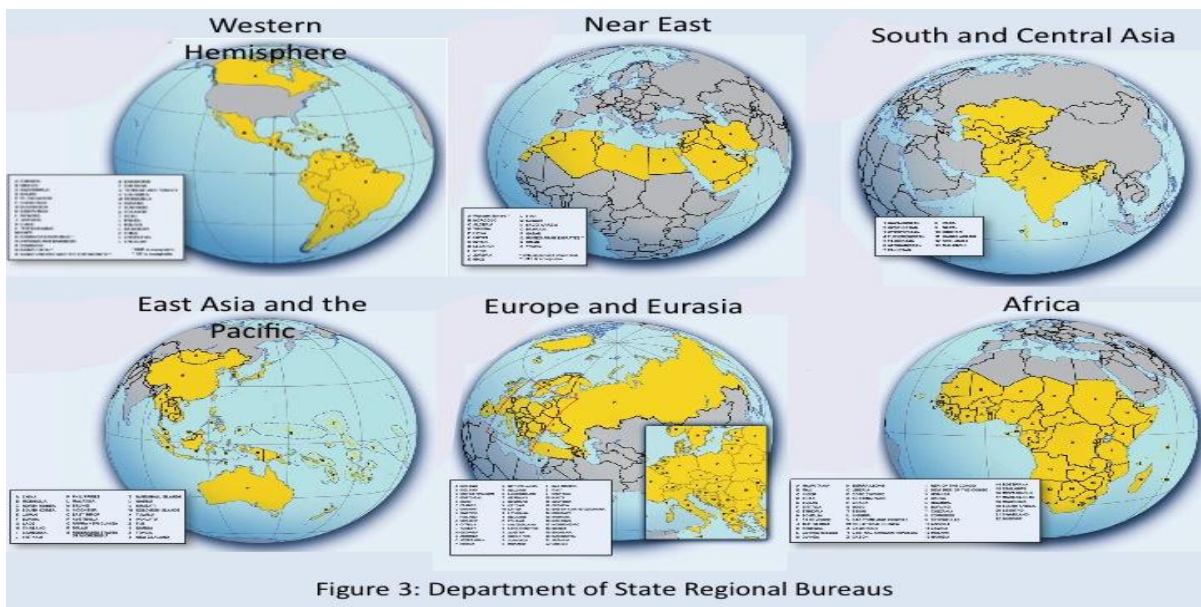


Figure 3: Department of State Regional Bureaus

bureaus respectively).⁴² I suggest two points to counter this argument. First, USSOUTHCOM and USAFRICOM have both made great strides towards achieving unified action and neither has altered their boundaries from what is prescribed in the UCP. Second, differences in regional boundaries help to mitigate the negative effects of boundary seams that could exist if all instruments of national power used the same regional boundaries. An interagency study should be conducted to determine what, if any, changes should be made to unified regional boundaries, but it should not preclude us from achieving the unity of effort imperative.

CONCLUSIONS

Attaining our national objectives requires the efficient and effective use of the diplomatic, informational, economic and military instruments of national power supported by and coordinated with those of our allies and various intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and regional organizations.

- Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-08 Vol I)

Achieving unified action to optimize resources and plans towards common national strategic objectives is an imperative for today's intergovernmental organizations. Unity of effort at the operational level is critical to achieving unity of effort at the strategic level, and should leverage existing organizations that are best equipped to facilitate unified action. The Geographic Combatant Command at the intersection of the operational and strategic levels has the preponderance of resources and expertise to synchronize all instruments of national power in order to achieve unified regional priorities in support of national strategic objectives. Geographic Combatant Commands should be transformed to Geographic Unified

⁴² Thompson, 62.

Commands by integrating interagency members in positions where their expertise can best be utilized to optimally synchronize all instruments of national power.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A concerted effort should be made towards improving the perception of the Geographic Combatant Commands, and the Department of Defense, as agents for unified action. To that end, joint doctrine should be reviewed to identify and change those terms that do not represent the Department of Defense in a unified role. For example, consider changing the following; “Geographic Combatant Commands” to “Geographic Unified Commands”, “Area of Responsibility (AOR)” to “Area of Activity (AOA),”⁴³ and “Range of Military Operations (ROMO)” to “Range of Operations that Shape the Strategic Environment (ROSSE).”

Geographic Unified Commands should be reviewed to ensure their leadership is appropriate (civilian or military) to optimally command and control forces attached or assigned, in order to achieve unified action. Consideration should be given to alternating between civilian and military leadership if there is potential to improve unity of effort in doing so. In either case, both civilian and military leadership should be represented at the highest levels of the GUC chain of command. If the Unified Commander (UCDR) is a military officer, then consideration should be given to appropriate civilian leadership at the deputy level.

⁴³ In addition to suggesting *Unified* vice *Combatant* Command, Ambassador Yates (Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities USAFRICOM) suggests that the doctrinal term Area of Responsibility (AOR) should be changed to Area of Activity (AOA) in order to remove negative connotations that the Geographic Unified Commander has responsibility over the affairs of nations within an assigned area.

Interagency personnel should be fully integrated throughout the Geographic Unified Command staff and participate to the maximum extent possible in all contingency and crisis action planning.

An interagency study should be conducted to determine what, if any, changes should be made to unified regional boundaries in order to strengthen regional focus and expertise without generating seams between regions that may be exploited by and an adversary.

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